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or Republican, but in their own wisdom, resolution, and patience. Mr. Lamar has become their pioneer on the right road ; and if there are men enough at the South, especially among the younger generation, who will follow him with equal ability and patriotism, it will not take very long to cut a broad way through the tangle in which we are embarrassed.

In the interest of the whole country, this question must be settled. It has become an issue of national life or death. Either this Union must be preserved as the North fought to maintain it, with its unequalled balance of national power and local self-government, with its widely separated interests blended into one national policy, its widely variant sentiment fused by the heat of a common patriotism into an enduring and advancing national civilization, or it must be separated by something worse even than violent secession. One half of the nation must be converted into an imperial despotism, corrupted and corrupting by its patronage and power, trampling, with superb and cruel selfishness, upon the rights and liberties of States and individuals ; while the other half is transformed into an abject and servile territory, its resources dried up and perished, its history obliterated, and its free people, of all races and colors, bound in a common "drooping and disconsolate household captivity, without refuge and without redemption."

WILLIAM HENRY TRESKOT.

ART. II. — THE WHISKEY RING.

CONGRESSIONAL investigations and the press have made known, though in somewhat disjointed form, the chief features of the late war upon whiskey thieves and their abettors. The present article is mainly an attempt to supply some omissions, correct current errors, and, so far as is now possible, set the story in proper order.

While this movement of Secretary Bristow for the suppression of whiskey frauds was a clearly defined campaign, having a definite beginning, sharp outlines, and a sudden ending, it is yet too early for any one to attempt its full history. Much of

it cannot be known, unless the Secretary himself discloses it. The secret machinations by which a formidable array continually excited the President against his Secretary as yet but partially appear. For each of the cities where the blow fell, there is a local history full of interest and illustrative of the political power wielded by the ring, which was not fully known in Washington. Some further developments yet await the ongoing of the chariot of justice, the wheels of which drag heavily just now.

The movement, in its origin, differed wholly from any other the department had undertaken. It was suggested by persons disconnected with the public service; the plan and its execution up to the point where success was assured were theirs.

Revenue officials of various grades have made statements concerning the organization of the raid, and each of them has mistaken the isolated work the Secretary or the Solicitor ordered them to do, for its beginning. Those who have had most to say to the public in regard to the part they played never had an intimation that such a move was in progress until success had been made certain by others. When it remained only to compare the indisputable facts collected with the various returns which the law requires concerning the manufacture and the sale of whiskey, revenue experts were called in to assist. Up to that time Secretary Bristow, Solicitor Wilson, a short-hand writer, and one person outside of the department and wholly disconnected with it, were the only persons in Washington who knew what was proposed, or how the plan was being executed. In St. Louis, likewise, where the first work was done, but three persons, all private citizens, until one was afterward secretly commissioned for this special work, had any knowledge of it whatever.

Entering the department in the summer of 1874, Mr. Bristow's attention was given first to its reorganization, and next to the efficiency of the service throughout the country. In the autumn and early winter he began to consider the means by which he could best strike at frauds on the revenue. A brief observation of the usual methods employed convinced him of their utter uselessness, where the aim was to overthrow the whole machinery of fraud. Special agents had made

demonstrations at the important Western centres of the whiskey trade ; but beyond creating a temporary fright among the thieves, and in some cases without accomplishing even that, for reasons which are now quite plain, no widely effective blow had been struck. The order for transferring supervisors, from which much was expected, had been issued by the President in February, and revoked at once by him in obedience to the demands of politicians. Honest distillers in various quarters were complaining that the illicit traffic was rapidly ruining their business, and were loud in their demands for relief. The Secretary, seeing that the ordinary means were not likely to secure this, began to consider the subject for himself, with the view of devising an effective method of attack.

At this juncture a most unusual proposition was laid before him, in a manner equally unusual ; and from it, and from it alone, the movement upon the St. Louis Whiskey Ring began.

On the 8th of February, 1875, Mr. George W. Fishback, proprietor of the St. Louis "Democrat," wrote an office letter to his Washington correspondent in regard to various matters then engaging public attention, and among them spoke in high praise of Secretary's Bristow's efforts for reform. The closing paragraph relating to this subject read as follows : —

"There has been much talk of late of the fraudulent whiskey traffic in the West. If the Secretary wants to break up the powerful ring which exists here, I can give him the name of a man who, if he receives the necessary authority and is assured of absolute secrecy about the matter, will undertake to do it, and I will guarantee success."

The correspondent took the liberty of showing this letter to the Secretary. The consultation over it occupied but a moment. The Secretary read it, and said, "I have been much troubled at the difficulties of striking that St. Louis ring. Please send a despatch to Mr. Fishback at once, asking him from me to telegraph the name, and assuring him that I will commission his friend immediately, and set him at work." This telegram of February 11, 1875, properly marks the opening of Secretary Bristow's noted campaign.

No answer arriving for two days, another message was sent by the same authority, asking again for the name. In reply,

word came that nothing could be safely trusted to the wires. The mail soon brought explanations and cautions. The man who had first been depended upon for the work, when actually faced with the telegram offering to commission him on receipt of his name, found his heart failing him, and finally declined to assume the grave responsibilities of the task. In the light of subsequent events, this decision will not excite wonder. Mr. Fishback, however, promised to find a man for the work, and shortly after sent the name of Mr. Myron Colony, secretary of the Cotton Exchange, and commercial editor of the "Democrat." With this letter came a statement of the supposed extent of the ring, its personnel, the names of the officers whom it controlled, and the fact that it received regular information from the department of all action affecting its interests. On this last account it was made a condition of undertaking the work, that no one connected with the internal-revenue service, or in the Secretary's office, should receive even a hint that any new move was contemplated. These conditions were accepted, and the whole matter was placed in the hands of Solicitor Bluford Wilson. It was arranged that he should have charge of all correspondence, and keep it out of the files, carefully securing it in his private desk. Mr. Fishback was requested to come on for consultation, and almost a whole day was given to the subject, those present being the Secretary, the Solicitor, Mr. Fishback, and his correspondent. The next day Mr. Colony's letter of instructions was made out. On the 5th of March this reached him at St. Louis, and he at once began to organize for his work.

Fortunately it had just been discovered that in some way, never yet fully ascertained, the ring had means of obtaining information sent in a department cipher. This led to going entirely outside for methods to insure absolute safety in the transmission of messages. Mr. Fishback, who consented to superintend the work at St. Louis, held with his correspondent in Washington a cipher perfectly arbitrary, and so entirely safe for the purpose. Thus it happened that from the time the movement began until the discoveries had made success certain, the orders of the department, and the information it received in regard to this most important move, passed in a

cipher which the department itself did not for several weeks possess or understand, and came and went through the hands of private citizens having no connection whatever with the public service. This outside care and use of the cipher was one of the Solicitor's precautions.

Before proceeding with the narrative of events, it will afford a better understanding of the powerful and malign influences which operated against the Secretary from the first, and gained strength to the end, to briefly review the history of the few months he had served in the Cabinet, previous to the time when this move against the Whiskey Ring began.

On the 2d of June, 1874, without previous consultation, President Grant nominated General Bristow as Secretary of the Treasury. In this case, as in others where he had held public place, the office sought the man. The department was demoralized and its discipline at a low ebb. He accepted it, with the understanding that such changes as seemed necessary to improve its efficiency should be made. The consequent removals stirred up the bitter hostility of several rings which had long held possession of the undercurrents of business in the department, and set a strong combination of influences in motion against the new Secretary.

Up to the night before Mr. Bristow was nominated, the Secretary of the Interior, Mr. Delano, felt confident of the appointment, and both he and his friends have always claimed that it had been promised to him. From the first moment, his near and peculiar following were secretly enemies, though their hostility did not become open till the following winter.

Three weeks after the new Secretary took his seat, the two houses of Congress, in accordance with a unanimous report from the Joint Committee on the Affairs of the District of Columbia, passed a resolution referring the evidence taken in the Safe-Burglary conspiracy to the Secretary of the Treasury and to the Attorney-General, for their action. The Secretary promptly charged Solicitor Wilson with a full investigation of the matter. In spite of ingenious attempts of those involved to throw the Solicitor off their track, by September he had made a report which excited consternation in all branches of the District Ring, including the United States District Attorney's

office, and turned the whole force of its powerful machinery — powerful because intrenched at the White House — against the Secretary and the Solicitor. These Safe-Burglary influences rallied, and sought to revenge themselves by the removal of the Solicitor, and, to secure their end, gave false reasons to the President. The latter yielded, and notified Secretary Bristow that the resignation of Mr. Wilson was desired. In reply, he stated his conviction that those working upon the President to secure this removal were simply attempting to vent their spite upon an officer who had bravely executed a most unpleasant duty. The Secretary further insisted that, as the Solicitor had acted under his orders, he should certainly stand by him, and if the President, after second thought, still desired the resignation, he would be compelled to ask that his own be accepted. Thus this intrigue was defeated.

The removal of the chief, and the principal members of the secret-service force, upon the report of Solicitor Wilson, arrayed a powerful enginery of evil against both these officers. The refusal to appoint certain applicants for the vacant positions made active and unscrupulous opponents of them and their confederates, and, as will be seen hereafter, this whole disreputable combination of detectives engaged in the general war on the Secretary.

An investigation into the Seal-Lock fraud added to the strong influences against him. After it had been in progress for some time, a Southern senator called, and said he hoped the Secretary did not intend to make any trouble over the Seal-Lock question, as he had a number of friends interested in it. Said the Secretary: "Senator, I am pushing that matter vigorously, and my hope is that, in a few months, I shall have all the prominent operators in the penitentiary." That senator and his friends have, from that day, failed to see anything but sordid ambition in Secretary Bristow.

The District Ring wanted the seal of the treasury printed on the District bonds, and other additions made which would enhance their value in some pending speculations in which millions were involved. The Secretary refused the request, standing firm through long importuning, and, as a consequence, this great interest stood back and waited its chance to strike him.

For a month before Congress met, the representatives of several of the far-reaching schemes seeking to obtain subsidies, gathered in Washington, and sought to secure co-operation from Secretary Bristow. Strongest among these was the Texas and Pacific road, with which he had been connected. This led the forces, and brought here, to influence him, a score of his intimate friends, among whom were a number of his neighbors and associates from Kentucky. Thus marshalled, the railroad lobby made an attack in force. Failing in the effort to secure a clause in the Secretary's report affirming the great national importance of their projects, they next tried to induce him to take no stand against them. In this they failed also, as a reference to that part of the report which treated of economy in the public expenditures, and the necessity of limiting expenses to the absolute needs of the government, will show. From that time the vast railroad influences of the country were against him. Their final rally at Cincinnati, and the part they played there, form the sequel.

A large and influential combination of agents for cotton claims were early exasperated by the strictness with which he construed the laws regulating the payment of such claims. During his entire term he allowed only about thirty small claims out of one thousand, or about \$75,000 out of nearly \$10,000,000. The disappointed agents, with all the disreputable influences which fasten upon most claims of this character, became a bitterly hostile army, and, in connection with all whom they could summon or command, waged persistent war upon the Secretary up to the time of his resignation, and were throughout active allies of the whiskey thieves. They originated investigations and concocted sensational scandals for the press.

The New Orleans Whiskey Ring, strongly supported by Republicans in Louisiana and in Washington, was arrayed in force against him. It had long been transporting grain in bulk from the central Western States, manufacturing it into whiskey, and underselling the up-river merchants.

The latter despatched their grain already manufactured into spirits, and so incurred much less freight charges. Still, the New Orleans Ring was enabled, by its frauds, to sell whiskey

at less than the cost of producing it there. The Secretary had sent a trusted officer to New Orleans as supervisor, and the moment the distillers found they were obliged to do a legal business, they closed their establishments altogether. It was impossible to run honestly and compete with the Western trade. From this time the main business of New Orleans distillers, with the wide political and official influences they were able to command in Louisiana, on the floor of Congress, and elsewhere, was to oppose Mr. Bristow.

Thus far, except as the Safe-Burglary prosecution soured some high officials, the Secretary encountered only outside influences. Cabinet intrigue had not as yet manifested itself. The familiars of the Interior Department were actively engaged in making trouble, but their chief had not seen fit to come into the light with his opposition. The contest was now to open in the Cabinet. The time of Ex-Senator E. G. Cattell as a financial agent of the treasury in London had expired. He had been of great service to Jay Cooke & Co. here, and to Jay Cooke, McCulloch, & Co. in London. His relations to Mr. Robeson were apparent then, and are very clear now. All these interests and influences insisted upon Cattell's reappointment. The Secretary positively declined, after several long, bitter, and persistent attempts to change his decision. The whole array then united, carried the matter to the President, and forced it into Cabinet relations. Mr. Delano found it convenient to step out of the dark, and range himself and his forces with the Secretary of the Navy, the Cookes, and the Cattells. The President soon yielded, and, at length, virtually ordered Cattell's reappointment. The Secretary of the Treasury assured the President he had positive evidence to prove that the appointment would be in the interest of dishonesty, and on that account he absolutely declined to make it. In spite of all this, those opposing him thought they might succeed, and continued to press their demand upon the President. The latter hesitated, and the many conspirators against the treasury took courage. All the rings in Washington were brought into play to worry and annoy the Secretary on other points, with the view of so increasing the discomfort of his position as to aid indirectly in inducing his retirement. In-

stead, he defeated the whole force by announcing that he would not appoint Cattell under any circumstances, and if he left the Cabinet in consequence, the country should know the facts, and understand how thieving had triumphed in the Cabinet of the President.

This grouping of the Secretary's relations and surroundings, and of the obstacles which crowded every path he trod, is necessary to any clear understanding of his contest with the Whiskey Ring. But, it should be remembered, these are outlines only. The ramifications of opposition which spread through all the lesser circles of influence commanded by these greater combinations cannot be followed out, but will readily suggest themselves.

At a time when the forces named and all they could control were uniting their efforts to render Secretary Bristow's place so uncomfortable through countless annoyances that he would resign in sheer disgust, his move on the Whiskey Ring began. Though sorely hampered, and thus loaded down with opposition, he did not hesitate. The blow he dealt cleared the field. The people rallied to him in irresistible force, and these disreputable combinations slunk back into the dark, where they bided their time.

At the end of the first week in March, Messrs. Fishback and Colony had perfected their plans and begun the work. There were seven or eight distilleries and as many rectifying-houses believed to be in the combination. These were to be watched, and a force was organized for this purpose. The amount of grain taken to each establishment, the shipments of liquor, the quantities sent to the rectifying-houses, the facts of the illegal night distillations, and, in short, all the features of each day's work at the suspected establishments, were noted and recorded. Watchmen were changed each day, so that their continued presence in any particular locality should not be noticed. The first day's observation developed the fact that all the distilleries, except one undergoing repairs, were running at night. This proved that the officers of the government, from collector and supervisor down, were either grossly neglecting their duties or were controlled by the ring. At length the distillers

found themselves watched. Their drivers and employees had marked some members of the secret force of observation. Roughts were hired to beat them. The police, under direction of superior officers, assaulted and arrested some, and, finally, the force was withdrawn for a time; not, however, before it had accomplished most that was desired, and quite enough to justify a general movement against the distilleries. The full history of these midnight battles of the roughs with the burly men who had been selected with reference to such contests is not by any means the tamest portion of the story.

Having established the fact that frauds were general in the management of the large distilleries, the next step was to trace the shipments. After manufacturing illicit spirits, the product must be promptly placed on the market, as the surest means of concealing the fraud. Mr. Colony reasoned that, if he could obtain a record of all shipments of spirits from the city for any period, a comparison of these with the official reports of the same shipments would inevitably show the extent of fraudulent dealing. He had long been engaged in preparing commercial statistics, and therefore no suspicion attached to his movements about the various transportation offices. He organized a force of copyists, and, without giving even a hint of his real object, took some of them to each landing or freight depot. He obtained permission to copy such statistics of shipments as he wished from the bills of lading on file in these offices. As a matter of caution, he directed his copyists to make full transcripts of the records of staple articles received into the city for three months, including whiskey. This done, he was ready for the real work in hand. The force was next instructed to copy bills of lading of shipments made for the same period to points outside the city. This completed, he had but to sort out the bills from the shippers of whiskey, and he had a description of every package of liquor shipped by each house for three months, made over the signature of their shipping clerks. This description was complete. It gave the name of the shipper, the consignee, the number of gallons, and the serial numbers of the stamps. It only remained to compare the records thus secured with the returns made to the collector's office by gaugers and storekeepers, and those which

the collector had sent to Washington, in order to ascertain the whole extent of the fraud, with many of the main actors in it, for a period of three months. As this work progressed a discovery was made which gave much more rapid results. Mr. Colony had obtained the description of several lots of fifty barrels each, that had been shipped to Charleston, Savannah, and Wilmington, which he believed to be fraudulent. These were telegraphed to the Solicitor. He at once sent an agent to Wilmington, to transcribe the records of receipts from St. Louis. From these the fact was discovered of duplications in shipments, through the double use of stamps, or the failure to enter one transaction. Here was one key that rapidly unlocked the mysteries of the ring.

In four weeks from the time Mr. Colony began, he had collected information that justified the seizure of the leading distilleries, and, in the end, led to the complete overthrow of the St. Louis Ring. Thus he with the Solicitor had obtained the facts in regard to the receiving and shipping of every package of liquor that had entered or left St. Louis for a period of three months, together with the marks which identified the packages, the names of the manufacturers, and the names of the dealers handling them. This was as far as the Solicitor's office could go, and it became necessary to have assistance from the office of Internal Revenue, — as, under the law, certain examinations of distillers' books and of warehouses could only be made by some one connected with that office. An internal-revenue clerk was ordered to report to the Solicitor, and was sent to St. Louis with no extended knowledge of the move in progress, but with instructions to make examinations of certain books, and await orders from Washington. He had little communication with those at work in St. Louis, but was directed by Messrs. Fishback and Colony through telegrams to the Solicitor's office in Washington. When, in the progress of the work, certain figures or entries were needed from the books of a dealer or distiller, the Solicitor was asked in cipher to order this clerk to obtain the figures. In the same way he was directed to lofts where illicit whiskey had been stored, to take the serial numbers of stamps.

Meantime, Mr. Colony's telegrams describing fraudulent

shipments to various Eastern and Southern cities continued to reach Washington, and were promptly investigated at the points of arrival, under the directions of the Solicitor. On the 1st of April, a special agent was also sent to St. Louis for the purpose of learning how the work was progressing, and to co-operate as an expert, if opportunity occurred. He was able to conceal his real object under cover of certain railroad matters with which he was known to be connected, but still so closely was he watched that some time elapsed before he could communicate personally with either of the gentlemen he was sent to assist. On the occasion of this visit, the evidence already collected was found to be sufficient to justify seizure.

The first actual work performed in the case by a special agent was on April 16th. The Secretary had insisted that no seizures should take place until the evidence collected had been compared with the official returns and the entries in the various firms' books, and a legal case made out. Solicitor Wilson had received a hint from a distiller who was trying to do a legitimate business, concerning one of the methods of duplicating packages. An agent of the department was ordered to communicate personally with this gentleman, and obtain all the information possible. As a result, on April 16th, a duplicate lot of three hundred barrels was found in warehouse. That is to say, a certain firm reported three hundred barrels of whiskey sent to a rectifying-establishment and "dumped," — the term for emptying into the common cistern, — and yet in the warehouse were found three hundred full barrels bearing the same marks and stamps, with the same serial numbers as those reported dumped. This at once furnished another most valuable method of tracing fraudulent packages. The record of all whiskey sent to the rectifiers is, or should be, contained in what are known as "dumping notices," which are regularly returned to the office of Internal Revenue. The agent went to Washington with this new clew, and was despatched by the Solicitor to New York to obtain transcripts from the books of all wholesale dealers of each lot of whiskey received from the West for the three months covered by Mr. Colony's work. These transcripts had also been ordered from Boston, Philadelphia, Savannah, Wilmington, Charleston, Atlanta, Mobile, New Orleans,

Galveston, Austin, and Little Rock, in order to trace fraudulent lots reported by Mr. Colony as shipped to those points. The transcript covering whiskey receipts in New York for three months was completed in two days. Thus rapidly did all parts of the work move on. At the same time, the dumping notices of the St. Louis distillers filed in the office of Internal Revenue were obtained, and brought to the Solicitor's office; and as rapidly as the transcripts arrived, the comparisons were made, and soon the gigantic proportions of the St. Louis frauds stood revealed, with the means at hand to uncover them in detail.

As the country knows, St. Louis was but one of three centres of the whiskey frauds that were subject to similar investigations. Soon after Mr. Colony began his work, he wrote the Solicitor that it was certain the same condition of affairs existed at Chicago and Milwaukee. The Solicitor at the same time received assurances from other sources that extensive frauds were in progress at these points. He at once placed the matter in charge of a veteran special agent, who organized a force and watched the Chicago distilleries, till he detected most of them in illicit transactions. He then visited Milwaukee, and accomplished the same results there. His was brilliant and most successful work, performed under great disadvantages. To go through its details would be to repeat the history of St. Louis. The one fact that it resulted in the capture of nearly every distillery of consequence in these two cities is sufficient comment. After he had collected his evidence the chief of the secret-service force, formerly chief of police in Chicago, was sent out to contribute to the move the great advantage of his peculiar local knowledge.

The work began in St. Louis on the 5th of March. Everything was ready for the seizures in that city, Milwaukee, and Chicago by the 3d of May; but they were not made until the 10th, owing to a week of waiting for the arrival of Mr. Pratt, who was to succeed Commissioner Douglass. The secrecy enjoined at the first had been maintained. No suspicion of the movement existed in the office of Internal Revenue until its success was beyond doubt, — in fact, until everything was

in readiness to order seizures. These, under the law, could be made only by order of the Commissioner of Internal Revenue. Thus far the Solicitor had employed the special agents of the treasury, and had made use of the appropriation for detecting frauds usually expended through the secret-service division.

For four weeks only those who had full knowledge of the matter at the beginning were in possession of its secrets, except as the Secretary, on finding that it was to be successful at St. Louis, gave its outlines to the President, just before the latter left Washington for the Lexington Centennial. From this moment to the time Secretary Bristow left the Cabinet, in spite of all assertions to the contrary, the President was promptly and fully advised of every important feature of the wide-reaching campaign. About the 1st of April one special agent was informed in general terms that efforts were making against the St. Louis Ring, but the attempt to put him in full communication with those managing the affair was not consummated until the middle of that month.

By the third week in April the ring had compared notes over certain suspicious movements of Mr. Colony's force. The fact that Mr. Fishback was in some way acting against them also became known. They succeeded in making themselves most uneasy, but were not able to fathom the mysterious movements which occasionally were dimly revealed to them, and which at one time caused them to temporarily suspend crooked operations. They made frequent inquiries of Supervisor McDonald whether any unusual movement was in progress, but he, being completely in the dark, assured them no move was even contemplated. Finally he ascertained his mistake, and without waiting for leave of absence, started at once for Washington. He was surprised to find that Commissioner Douglass had no information to give him; but on calling upon the Solicitor, he ascertained in very general terms that certain examinations into the whiskey affairs of his district were in progress. Of details he learned nothing, except that the department had knowledge of frauds being perpetrated. With his previous experience of the ease with which the department had been managed, it is not a matter of wonder that in the first instance he was not alarmed.

To show his ready methods of dealing with such subjects, and how lightly he regarded the extensive frauds on the revenue, of which he of course had knowledge, it is worth recording that he actually proposed that the Solicitor should turn the whole case of the St. Louis distillers over to him at once, as a matter properly falling within his official duties. He knew them, he could manage them, and beyond question, if they had been guilty of fraud, he could recover more money from them personally, in view of exemption from exposure and seizure, than could ever be collected by the law; so he declared.

As further evidence of the perfect freedom he felt in making propositions to the Treasury Department, in regard to matters of this kind, he proceeded to say, that in no event would it be an advantage to accept his resignation, since he could exert more political influence west of the Mississippi than any other man. Next, as if to emphasize his previous easy methods of dealing with grave matters of fraud, he went on to say that he had been and was a strong third-term man. The scheme to make General Grant President again would, however, in his judgment, fail. If it did, he should surely be for Bristow, and would be glad to give him the benefit of his full support.

Upon the President's return, toward the last week in April, he was fully advised by Secretary Bristow of the rapid progress which had been made in unearthing the ring. He took great interest in the matter, and gave hearty co-operation. He said he had been thinking much on the subject during his absence, and had been trying to determine in his own mind who of those he knew in St. Louis would be the best men with which to replace the unworthy ones. He made special inquiries as to the evidences of neglect or guilt against a number for whom he had long had most friendly feelings, and expressed himself as surprised and personally outraged at their conduct, and determined to promptly remove them.

From the time of McDonald's visit, the ring in St. Louis began to show signs of increased uneasiness. The distilleries were put in honest working order, ready for what they supposed would be a sudden inspection by some new hands. Of the real nature of the case made against them none had a suspicion.

When the returns of officers and distillers at the three cities were called for by the Solicitor, in spite of the fact that they were taken in moderate instalments, the clerks in charge of records learned that some move of an unusual character was progressing. It is doubtful whether these records had ever before been examined since they were taken from the mails and deposited in the files. Thus a week before the seizures, a report gained circulation that St. Louis, Chicago, and Milwaukee were to be "struck."

The ignorance of the local officers, who had never before found any difficulty in warning the distillers, partially allayed the fears of the latter, and positive denials of any move by several newspaper correspondents who had inquired at the office of Internal Revenue, though exceedingly inaccurate as the sequel showed, were of great value in quieting the ring while evidence was accumulating, both through the comparison of records and the continued observations on the Western theatres of action.

The fact that Mr. Colony had withdrawn his force of watchmen also gave them confidence, and so far removed their fears that fraudulent operations were in measure resumed. Their spies could hear of none of the known agents of the department in town, and the usual sources of full official information from Washington discovered no signs of any concerted movement. Toward the close of the investigations several members of Congress from the Northwest, whose "constituents" had become alarmed over indications that their business was to be interfered with, called at the department and at the White House to learn what was going on, and unconsciously to illustrate the perfect unconcern with which under our system members of Congress step in between the government and thieves, if the latter only belong to "the party." At the White House these members learned in a vague way that movements of some kind were in progress, and their fears were aroused. At the Internal Revenue office they were assured that it was all quiet along the Lakes. The total information acquired caused the uneasiness among their "constituents" to increase, but beyond this no harm was done.

The last week was one of great anxiety at the department.

It had finally been decided to move on the ring in the three cities on the same day. While the seizures could not be evaded even though the full character of the move became known, it was on many accounts most desirable that the enemy should be surprised.

Since, under the law, seizures could be made only by authority of the Commissioner of Internal Revenue, and by officers of his service acting under him, the question of a change in the head of that office was taken into consideration. There was no belief entertained and no evidence found to show that Mr. Douglass had any relations with the ring. It was certain, however, that the secrets of his office had been betrayed, and it had become apparent that much carelessness attended the application of the tests and guards provided to detect and prevent fraud. It was decided that a change should be made, and Ex-Senator Pratt was selected by the President, and the position offered him. He could not reach Washington, however, for a week, and everything was ready for seizure. Delay might do serious damage. It was then determined to open the whole matter to Mr. Douglass, and let the blow fall at once. He entered promptly and heartily into the work, and the plan for seizure and the orders for it were immediately prepared. On Friday night, May 6th, three parties left Washington, one for St. Louis, one for Chicago, and one for Milwaukee, with full instructions to seize distilleries and rectifying-houses in those cities. So secret was the management, that when, on the following Monday, May 10th, the order was executed, not a proprietor at any point was expecting such a proceeding. A few were awaiting search and had thoroughly prepared their premises for it, but none of them could understand the grounds upon which distilleries and rectifying-houses in unquestionably honest and legal condition were thus suddenly seized.

After the seizing parties had left Washington, a telegram in cipher from St. Louis announced that the ring had fathomed the movement and would doubtless be found fully prepared on Monday, and so the additional advantage of entering the establishments unexpectedly would be lost. This telegram contained the information that a despatch had come over the wires

from Washington to a prominent distiller, saying, "Lightning will strike on Monday. Inform our friends in the country."

This startled those in the secret, and it was accepted as positive proof that the department was betrayed by some one holding a most confidential position. Energetic efforts were at once put forth to discover the author, but at first without success. The mystery deepened when it was ascertained that on the following Monday none of the distillers or rectifiers exhibited any knowledge of the general move. Finally the problem was solved, but not until the harmless telegram, as it turned out to be, had attracted universal attention.

The despatch, however, is connected with an interesting chapter in this history. Before the Secretary had formed any definite plan for discovering the frauds, he was assured by several large manufacturers and dealers, known by the department to be honest, of co-operation in any attempt he might make to check the frauds that were fast destroying their business. Just as the St. Louis movement was in its incipency, and when the least knowledge of its details would probably defeat it entirely, fresh appeals were made to the Secretary by several large liquor-houses for protection from the rapidly increasing illicit traffic. A delegation of Western distillers notified him of their intention to visit Washington for the purpose of laying before the department and the President what they knew of the frauds, furnishing this knowledge to the press, and demanding action. To keep these interests quiet, several of the leading firms were made acquainted with the fact that the Secretary had begun certain operations with which, if they would be patient and observe silence for a few weeks, he believed they would be entirely satisfied. Of details they knew nothing. Three gentlemen known to the Secretary, and acquainted with all branches of the liquor traffic, were asked for such information in regard to the methods of fraud as they possessed or could gather, and furnished most valuable material. Having no idea of the magnitude of the movement in progress, they still knew it was expected the ring would be overthrown, and so were content. One of these gentlemen passed through Washington the day parties started to make the seizures. Naturally he made inquiries as to the general

progress of the secret campaign, and was told the blow would fall on Monday. Before leaving for New York, he sent the telegram which so soon became notorious, not to any member of the ring, but to those who were aiding in its overthrow.

The facilities for obtaining information had become so good for those in St. Louis who were working against the ring, that this "lightning" telegram, without signature, fell into their hands, and was at once sent back to Washington, where it played its undesignedly sensational part before the public. Its real origin was not discovered for several weeks after the culmination of the movement. It caused many anxious hours at Washington before the telegraph began to bring in the results of the first day's open battle. A great weight was lifted from those who had thus far planned and watched and labored through ten exciting weeks, when the news came that the surprise might be called complete. While few had been caught in the act of running crooked, fewer still had ceased such operations until their character and extent were discovered. Of the chief evidence against them, and that upon which the seizures in all quarters were made, the guilty parties knew nothing. They were wholly ignorant of the fact that their methods of fraud had been discovered, and the evidence of them traced through the official records and fully established. The discovery of these, heretofore hidden, was, after all, the crowning success and distinguishing feature of the whole movement. It not only struck down those immediately discovered, but it furnished the means of testing the transactions of every distillery and rectifier in the land. At a blow it completely shattered the ring throughout the country.

Had every one of the distilleries seized been informed of the movement in progress, after the end of four weeks' work, none would have escaped. The investigation after that date, as has been seen, was such as would not have been greatly hindered by full knowledge on the part of the guilty that it was in progress. As a matter of fact, several establishments were subsequently seized, which at the time were not running. As may be imagined, the surprise of the proprietors was great. This changed into astonishment when they became aware of the nature of the evidence against them, and this, in turn, gave way to consternation at the wide reach of the movement.

At the end of the first day's public operations, sixteen of the largest distilleries of the country, and a like number of prominent rectifying-houses, were in the possession of the government. These were the chief ring establishments at its principal centres, — St. Louis, Chicago, and Milwaukee. It was not, however, until the third day that the real nature of the blow which had fallen was generally comprehended. As other distilleries and rectifying-houses were taken, and it was seen that the receivers as well as the manufacturers of the illicit product had been discovered, and fraudulent packages seized in every important city from Boston to Galveston, and from points in Central Texas to Milwaukee, the whiskey ring of the country recognized the complete overthrow of its fraudulent business. It turned frantically toward the officials it had controlled, and who had shielded and saved it so long, only to find them helpless. It appealed to the politicians, to whom it had rendered previous service, to find that scarcely one of them dared even to write or telegraph on the subject. One representative telegraphed to a senator, asking him to obtain a stay of proceedings for one firm; but the senator simply referred it to the treasury, without a word, except of excuse for doing even that. Washington politicians had been taking new lessons in political science for some time from Secretary Bristow, and made up their minds that, while he was moving actively in such work as he had in hand, it would be prudent for them to stand neutral for a time. The message to them from the department and the people commanded non-interference with an authority which they dared not even appear to question. For once, the political machine stood still. For many years there had been no cases of defrauding the government so flagrant but representatives or senators could be found to hasten into the department in the interest of the perpetrators. But now the treasury was clear of this hindrance. A few of this class of political attorneys started for Washington; but the signs of popular feeling either turned them back, or aside to the watering-places.

Meantime the treasury was active. It had captured the enemies' positions over half a continent. Could it hold them? Henceforth its work must be in the sight of the guilty. Bold-

ness, untiring energy, and activity could alone bring success. In all quarters investigations went on day and night. Important evidence accumulated with startling rapidity. First, the whole system of fraud was revealed; and next, many official abettors, or, more accurately, perhaps, official heads of the ring, were discovered. Officers of the courts and all grades of revenue officials and employees were found to be implicated. Each had a price formally fixed and regularly paid. As the inquiry progressed, unmistakable signs appeared of former full and free communication with Washington.

The treasury pushed its work with vigor, until, as it has finally joined issue with the ring in the courts, its presentment is about as follows:—

Appraised value of property seized	\$ 1,500,000
Assessed against illicit spirits	1,600,000
Amount of suits on gaugers' bonds	250,000
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Total	\$ 3,350,000

The indictments were these:—

Distillers	47
Rectifiers	60
Wholesale dealers	10
Other private parties	35
Gaugers	68
Store-keepers	7
Supervisors of internal revenue	2
Collectors	4
Deputy collectors	5
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Total	238

The law regulating the collection of the whiskey tax would be effective against fraud if the officers charged with its execution were honest. A dishonest store-keeper at a distillery could allow two quick fermentations in the time the law prescribed for one, and permit the distiller to so keep his books as to show but half or even a less proportion of his real production. A gauger at a rectifying-establishment could allow entries of spirits never received to be made on the books, and refrain at will from cancelling stamps upon lots ready for shipment. And when the collectors and supervisors, and their chief depu-

ties and assistants, not only winked at such neglect, but made the tenure of subaltern offices conditional upon them, the facilities for fraud were practically unlimited.

The greater portion of it was perpetrated by one of two methods,—the duplication of packages, or the shipment of large packages, for which check stubs representing only small amounts were retained.

Under the first method, a distillery would sell fifty barrels, for instance, of regular tax-paid spirits to a rectifying-house. There it would be emptied. Instead of cancelling the stamps, the gauger would either allow the barrels to go back to the distiller, or suffer the stamps to be removed and returned. Under cover of these stamps a shipment would be made to some distant city, and thus fifty barrels paying no tax would be disposed of. In some cases the stamps were a second time returned, and a third shipment made under them to some other point. The second method was made possible by the form and the system of keeping the record of stamps. The latter were printed with stubs attached, and issued to gaugers for use. Each stamp would protect any number of gallons which the gauger could be prevailed upon to fill in. A rectifier might buy one hundred packages, containing forty gallons each, and apply for stamps to cover four thousand gallons. The gauger might report them as contained in four hundred packages of ten gallons each. But instead, eighty gallons could be put into each package, and the stamp filled to cover them, while the record on the stub charged the rectifier with only ten-gallon packages. With the three hundred and fifty remaining stamps twenty-eight thousand gallons of illicit spirits could be placed on the market. Commissioner Pratt reports this as by no means an extreme case. By either method, the opportunity for fraud was boundless. One house was found where fifty-three thousand gallons were put on the market by false stubs, in a single week; and another house testified that it manufactured two hundred and twenty-five thousand gallons a month, and that half its entire annual product was “crooked.”

From the best estimates made up to the present time, the ring, at the date of its capture, was defrauding the government at a rate little, if at all, below three millions of dollars annually.

When the blow first fell, there was general consternation in the ranks at which it was directed. Then followed a brief recovery, and short season of defiance, as the distillers turned to those in official station upon whom they had been accustomed to depend for relief. But when they ascertained that this corrupt official power was broken and could avail nothing, they were in despair over the situation, and filled with resentment toward the powerless men who had promised them protection.

The false officials nourished their courage for a few days by affecting to whistle the movement down the wind as something done by new men for effect, which would speedily come to nothing.

The Treasury Department soon put an end to all dreams of the ring that their troubles would easily pass through interference at Washington ; but while some advocated full surrender, the bolder spirits controlled, and both sides prepared for a bitter struggle.

The Secretary had moved with great caution. He had personally reviewed the testimony in each case where seizure was contemplated, and before it was ordered had satisfied himself that a legal case existed which could be made good, without the additional evidence that subsequent investigation and the possession of the establishment and its books might give. But there was no rest here. The seizures accomplished, the whole force at the command of the department was set actively at work to gather additional evidence, and, with the light already thrown upon its operations, to follow every trace which could be discovered, and explore all the dark corners of ring transactions. The secrecy which had been necessary from the first inside the department had limited its working force, as has been seen, to the Solicitor and a few trusted assistants. It was now extended so as to embrace the full machinery of the office of Internal Revenue. The Solicitor continued to assist, using, as before, the special treasury agents, and under the new commissioner, his office and that of the Solicitor worked their combined forces vigorously in perfect accord and with great effect, and from this time Mr. Pratt became one of the most earnest actors in the movement.

A force of clerks was organized by Mr. Pratt, and under

direction of the proper experts, the returns of every distiller and rectifying-house in the country were compared with the returns which were intended to be a check upon them, and with the transcripts taken from the books of wholesale dealers in every important city in the country. Every package of spirits which appeared on any of these returns was traced, and its honest or fraudulent character ascertained. The discovery of the methods of fraud had placed the distillers, the dealers, and the corrupt officials at the mercy of the department. Had every man engaged in collecting testimony at the West been withdrawn, the seizures could still have progressed through the discoveries which this comparison of records afforded, so fully had the system of fraud and the tests for its disclosure been mastered.

The fact that fraud had been committed on so vast a scale was sufficient moral evidence of the guilt of revenue officers. The false returns of gaugers and store-keepers afforded legal proof of their complicity; while collectors and supervisors, and their assistants, were clearly responsible for a neglect which, under the law, would subject them to criminal prosecution, even though their guilt was not that of actual participants. The prompt removal of all grades of officers through whose neglect the frauds had been made possible was absolutely necessary, was at once asked by the Secretary, and agreed to by the President. While the question of succession was in some cases still pending, the accumulation of evidence began dimly to disclose the forms of prominent citizens and officers of the law in close relation, at least, to the transactions of the ring. Abundant reasons were developed for distrusting the District Attorney's offices in the three cities, and the problem of dealing with suspected officials became more complicated. Citizens and officers who for long years had wielded great influence at home and at the White House, and in consequence of high standing there at the department also, and who at home were the directors of local political affairs, were suddenly held up to the nation in disgrace. The Secretary's brilliant and effective campaign, the magnitude of the fraud, the general collusion of officers, and the thoroughness of the exposure, fixed the attention of the entire country, and public sentiment was so strongly in sympathy with the movement as to neutralize for

the time every effort of the guilty parties to shield themselves. None dared interfere openly to save them. And at this stage of the movement the voice of the people, as heard through the press, made the Secretary impregnable. So great was the popular applause, that persons who were even then working vigorously to secure a third term deemed it necessary to write the President into the most active participation in the movement, and he was represented, through the procurement of these friends, as having suggested the raid, and written many of the telegrams directing it; as having visited the Solicitor's office night after night, reviewing the situation, and studying, and sending messages. That he did none of these things is now well known, though his co-operation was hearty throughout the early stages of the work.

That his friends should deem it necessary to give him a false prominence, and present him as the originator and leader, is suggestive of the strength of reform movements with the people, and the force with which public opinion was then driving the politicians.

The remaining weeks of May and the first of the summer were employed in energetic and well-rewarded efforts to discover the guilty and obtain their indictments. During this work the local combinations and their political backers found opportunity to rally. They did not dare to come boldly into the light, but, standing back in the dark, they gained sufficient courage to watch, and plot, and strike as occasion offered.

The efforts to remove unworthy or distrusted officers called all their machinations into play to find effective means of reaching the President. Under the guise of honest recommendation, and plausible objections to appointees desired by the Secretary, they partially succeeded in their efforts to cripple his movement. When entire State delegations in Congress contend stoutly for the right to appoint a page, messenger, or boy in the folding-room, we have a standard by which to measure the heat and bitterness of a struggle involving millions of money, which politicians, intent on saving themselves or their guilty friends, waged over the selection of officials to replace those whose removal the President had made certain. This

contest caused delay at critical moments, and important advantages were lost for want of officers who could be implicitly trusted. In general, the guilty revenue officials of the lower grades were removed as fast as discovered. The Secretary himself could take the initiative and insist upon action there, but serious and damaging delay attended attempts to remove the collectors at several points; and as another department must be consulted, it was a still slower process to reach the officers of the courts. Some of these were not removed until many important cases had suffered considerably.

The rings were now partially on their feet again, and with the assistance of able counsel, and all the forces they could rally, the struggle for life began. By common consent it was necessary to break down the Secretary of the Treasury. The corner-stone of defence was a persistent effort to poison the President's mind against this officer and his Solicitor. This part of the campaign never flagged. It was planned with skill and executed with Satanic ingenuity. The Secretary felt its influence at every step; and no sooner had he baffled it in one form than it assumed new shapes and faced him on another line of approach. All the combinations named as arrayed against him at the time the move began became allied forces in this war; and all found as ready means of securing access to the President as the Secretary himself enjoyed. Even the Barnard letter, of which so much has been said on account of the indorsement, "Let no guilty man escape," was in fact a covert attack on the three prosecutors of the ring at St. Louis, Mr. Dyer, General Henderson, and Major Eaton. The first two were denounced to the President as his firm enemies, and the last as their tool. This letter, which has passed for honest dealing with the President, was the first attempt made to prejudice him against the government counsel. The indorsement upon it was the earnest protest of an honest man against the intimation that he would screen the guilty. While the letter represented some disgraced members of the ring as implying by their threats that General Babcock was implicated with them, the President expressed the firmest faith in his innocence, and in that conviction wrote the indorsement, as an answer both to the insinuation that Babcock was involved, and that he himself would extend favors to the guilty.

The various forces of the opposition were at this time closing in upon the Secretary. While the President recognized the propriety of the general policy suggested by Mr. Bristow, the latter saw how obstacle after obstacle was placed in his way, through the secret influences exerted upon the President. There was delay when the greatest promptness was demanded ; and often where changes were asked, the new appointments were improperly controlled by manipulations to which the President was insensible. The indorsement came to the Secretary as a relief force to a garrison about to be overcome. To make it effective, its publication was deemed of the greatest importance, and the Secretary wrote the President, asking permission to give it to the press. The fact that this note remained unanswered caused much uneasiness. At the same time, the " Sylph " despatch was adding serious difficulties to the situation. This telegram was to Joyce, and read : " I have succeeded. They will not go " ; and the evidence collected showed beyond reasonable doubt that it was to notify the ring that he had succeeded in preventing two revenue agents, who had been ordered to investigate affairs at St. Louis, from going there. General Babcock was early apprised of it. His explanation, when taken in connection with other points of the evidence, was regarded as worse than useless at the department. The President, however, accepted it, and from this time his interest in the prosecution perceptibly diminished, and the attention he gave to all points which the ring presented became a serious obstacle and the cause of grave embarrassment. To such an extent did the President's indifference and coolness appear, that in the first days of September the Secretary prepared his resignation, and went to Long Branch to place it in the hands of the President. To the few friends whom he consulted, he stated his conviction that the ring, and the politicians who were seeking to defend it, were exercising such influence upon the President as in the end would inevitably defeat the movement ; that while the President intended to do only right, his mind was so continually poisoned with the falsehoods which were deliberately coined to block the way of the prosecution, that he was wholly discouraged, and altogether convinced it was of no use to push the matter any further. The

“ Sylph ” telegram had produced coolness, and aroused opposition which seemed insurmountable. Certain delays in removing disloyal or dishonest officers at several important points convinced him that in the end the ring would triumph, and for these reasons he had decided to resign. To the credit of the President, the consequent interview ended in a full understanding, and the Secretary returned to his work with renewed courage.

Such was the situation only four months after the blow was struck, and before any of the principals had been brought to trial. At that early day it required the shock of a resignation tendered because a Cabinet officer felt himself unsupported in an effort to punish thieves, to arouse the President to a sense of the position he had taken under the lead of false advisers.

This sunshine for the Secretary was of brief duration. The entire army of those opposing him approached the President through countless avenues, and in endless variation asserted Babcock's innocence, the Secretary's ambition, his desire to strike down the President through his private secretary, or even by entering the Executive household if need be, in order to further that ambition, and the immense harm his exposures were inflicting on the party. On one hand, detectives reported falsehoods; on the other, high dignitaries of the party denounced the course that held up corruption to the public gaze as a blow at Republicanism.

The character and the power of the attempts to crush the Secretary will best appear from a brief consideration of some of the schemes which were most prominent.

After the indictment of McDonald and Joyce, the President visited St. Louis, accompanied by Babcock. Wide circulation was given to a statement that neither he nor General Babcock would consent to have any communications with either of these named, and had refused their cards. There were reasons disclosed in the evidence collected that made it seem prudent to watch McDonald, Joyce, and Babcock. Mr. Wilson accordingly wrote to Mr. Henderson, requesting that this might be done; adding, that the whole conspiracy must be explored from bottom to top. This last word left room to insert after it the letters “ W. H.,” and it was subsequently interpreted to the

President that these letters stood for White House, and the letter itself showed clearly that Wilson had ordered detectives set to watch the President while he was in St. Louis. Wilson's letter had been stolen from Mr. Henderson and given to Joyce. The latter passed it to Babcock. Who executed the forgery of the letters "W. H." is not known; but once done, it was made the basis of a settled and persistent attempt to secure the removal of Solicitor Wilson. The interpolated letter was kept in possession of the ring for some time before the attention of the President was called to it, and finally advantage was taken of Wilson's absence to press home the manufactured case against him. The President was informed in regard to it, and was much excited by the idea that he had been followed by detectives. The conspiracy worked well, and would doubtless have succeeded, but for the fact that at the very point of success Wilson returned, and showed conclusively that the original letter contained no interlineation, and would not bear the false construction given it. This is in brief the history of an effort to remove Solicitor Wilson, and involve him and the Secretary in a charge of setting spies to watch the President. In this work some of Babcock's nearest, shrewdest, and most influential friends took an active and earnest part.

Strange and mortifying as it may appear, there is no resisting the conclusion that the Attorney-General's office, at an early day, became active in the attempt to prevent, first, the trial, and afterwards the conviction, of General Babcock. The points of this effort are clear.

After the discovery of the "Sylph" despatch, and its identification as General Babcock's, and when it became known that District Attorney Dyer was ready to go before the grand jury with this and other evidence collected, to show General Babcock's complicity, the Attorney-General sent for Mr. Dyer, and, after consultation over the case, by which he ascertained the latter's belief in Babcock's guilt, he directed Dyer to send all the evidence to him, that he, as Attorney-General, might determine whether there was sufficient ground for taking the case before the grand jury at all. Here was an unheard-of

interference. In cases of this character, the officers of the Treasury Department, and not the Attorney-General, are, by law, charged with conducting them. Such interference was, in itself, an official impertinence, to say nothing of its otherwise remarkable character. The District Attorney, however, declined to take the evidence to Washington, and this first attempt to break down the prosecution failed.

The military court, and the Attorney-General's action in connection with that, was the next important move in the same direction. While the Avery trial was in progress in November, General Babcock was earnest in his directions to have matters so arranged as, at all hazards, to prevent his being called to St. Louis. This was disclosed by his cipher despatches to Mr. Luckey, the President's secretary, who, curiously enough, was on the ground, carefully watching the progress of affairs, and reporting daily to General Babcock. On the last day of the Avery trial, a number of telegrams were read, apparently involving General Babcock. The next day, when the evidence closed, he telegraphed Mr. Dyer, demanding to be heard. His previous despatch to Mr. Luckey, insisting that matters should be arranged so as to prevent his being called to St. Louis, was in most difficult cipher. The demand upon Dyer to be heard was given to the country through the Associated Press. The reply to it could only be, that no opportunity for a hearing would be possible till the next trial. Upon receiving this, General Babcock, as he had the right to do, demanded a military court of inquiry; and the President, encouraged to a certain extent by the Attorney-General, determined to take the case out of the hands of the civil courts and turn it over to a military tribunal. General Babcock's right to such a court was not questioned by any member of the Cabinet; but the President's blunt proposition to suspend civil proceedings, and give the whole case into the hands of the military court, was stoutly objected to, and the President himself finally made to see its illegality and impropriety.

On the 3d of December, the grand jury at St. Louis being then engaged upon the case of General Babcock, and his speedy indictment expected, the President called a special

Cabinet meeting, to consider the application for the court of inquiry. The proceedings of that meeting, and the adjourned one which followed the next day, are only known in outline. It was stormy from the first, and it was with difficulty that open and sharp rupture over the President's proposition was prevented. Members of the Cabinet, not by any means in accord with Secretary Bristow in regard to the policy of his prosecutions, saw, with painful clearness and alarm, that the administration could not stand before the public if a break occurred on the points under consideration; and an adjournment was skilfully secured in season to avoid it. The President had opened the meeting with a declaration of his absolute confidence in the innocence of General Babcock, which was given in such tone and manner as made it evident he meant to carry with his words a sharp rebuke to Bristow. With exceeding bitterness, he charged that experts had been sent out by the Treasury Department to identify Babcock's handwriting in the suspicious telegrams. In the same tone and manner he announced his intention to have the Attorney-General telegraph St. Louis, suspending all civil proceedings against Babcock, and turning the case over to the military court. The law officer of the government did not oppose this. The Secretary of the Treasury, at the risk of open rupture, protested against the step, and finally it became possible to discuss the question at considerable length. The result was an agreement that the matter should be postponed for a day, until the Attorney-General could consult authorities and prepare a formal opinion.

Mr. Pierrepont was too good a lawyer to be willing to formally advise the President in the direction of his desires. Through much talk and many explanations, the next day's consultation of the Cabinet opened without a storm. The Attorney-General presented the legal difficulties, and Secretary Bristow supported him strongly; and finally the President was brought to see that the case could not properly be taken from the civil court, though, by common consent, it was agreed that the military inquiry should proceed. While the Attorney-General saw no way of superseding the civil proceedings by formal order, he at once gave such directions as would indirectly accomplish the same result. Informing Dyer that the

military court did not restrain him in the performance of any duty which the law imposed, — a sufficiently strange declaration from an Attorney-General in time of peace, — he, nevertheless, ordered that the documentary and other evidence collected by the District Attorney, together with the names of all witnesses, be sent to Chicago, and thus the whole case virtually turned over to this military tribunal, which had no power to punish, and could only express an opinion on the subject of the inquiry. To this demand — to his honor be it recorded — Mr. Dyer refused to accede, and called the Attorney-General's attention to the fact that such an order could not be executed without a contempt of the court at St. Louis.

The military court met at Chicago, December 9th. The Judge-Advocate, into whose hands, had Mr. Pierrepont's order been executed, all the evidence against General Babcock would have fallen, being, as the President was afterwards assured, a gentleman who held confidential relations to General Babcock, in connection with business transactions, no scheme could have been devised by desperate men better calculated to defeat the cause of justice. On the 9th, the grand jury at St. Louis returned a true bill against Babcock, for conspiracy to defraud the revenue. It only remained for the court of inquiry to suspend proceedings, and its dissolution followed. The temper of the law officer of this court toward the civil officers at St. Louis is well illustrated by his report of proceedings, as forwarded to the War Department, in which he twice attacks Mr. Dyer for disobeying the Attorney-General in not sending evidence to Chicago.

If the history of the whole case be searched through, crowded as it is with mortifying interferences in favor of the guilty, nothing more reprehensible or remarkable can be found than the circular letter sent by the Attorney-General to the district attorneys at Milwaukee, Chicago, and St. Louis.

It should be remembered that the Attorney-General was not charged by law with the management of these cases. This was vested in the Secretary of the Treasury and the Commissioner of Internal Revenue. He would have travelled no further out of his way, had he addressed a circular letter to

foreign ministers. He did not even consult the Secretary of the Treasury. The letter, as will be remembered, was one virtually forbidding district attorneys to allow accomplices to turn state's evidence, under promises of immunity. Mr. Pierrepont did not even inquire of the Secretary of the Treasury, or his Solicitor, who was conducting the trials, whether any considerable number of persons had been thus accepted as witnesses, but sent the letter, contravening the long-established rule relating to the testimony of accomplices in criminal cases, in response — as he himself stated in a letter addressed to the House of Representatives—to newspaper slips and private letters which came to the President and himself.

The fact is, that these stories of immunity were circulated and magnified by the prominent political influences of the ring, for the purpose of saving themselves. The President was made to believe that all distillers and lower grades of officers were to be released without punishment, if they would agree to swear against prominent politicians and high officials. He was assured it was a scheme, on a large scale, to obtain evidence upon which to enter his household, and with which to bring down his friends at the West.

No one took more active part in this war against accepting any testimony of accomplices than the attorneys of General Babcock. Some of them were in Washington, and one of them figured prominently in the procurement and publication of the circular letter. As a matter of fact, at the time the President ordered it written, but one accomplice had been accepted as a witness, although the President himself, a month before, expressed the opinion, upon the question being submitted by Secretary Bristow, that no price in the way of immunity was too great to pay for the capture of the political members of the ring at Chicago. And in this he went much further than the Secretary was inclined to go. Yet in the face of the fact, which could have been so easily ascertained, that only one person had been granted immunity, prompted by newspaper slips and personal statements, the Attorney-General, at the dictation of the President, wrote a secret letter which struck a vital blow at the success of some of the most important criminal cases then pending.

The particular circumstance to which the prosecution attributes the origin of the circular letter is well worthy of attention. A gauger named Everist, who was said to have personal knowledge of the forwarding of money by Joyce to Babcock, had been induced to leave the country. He fled to Italy, but was subsequently prevailed upon to return. He had reached Philadelphia, and made his statement to Mr. Dyer, who met him there. This fact was almost immediately made known to the Attorney-General and the President, and in less than an hour was in the possession of General Babcock. If Everist's statement was accepted through his turning state's evidence, Babcock's case would be desperate. Unless all who watched the course of affairs in Washington, and from the vantage-ground of official position, misapprehended the matter, the circular letter was designed especially to affect Everist. The Attorney-General himself, in his letter to the House of Representatives, said he had ascertained that General Babcock caused it to be copied from the President's papers and made public. It went to the press from the hands of one of Babcock's counsel then in Washington. The Attorney-General's account of the letter as given to Solicitor Wilson, and by the latter repeated under oath, was in substance that the President directed him to write it, and upon seeing the draft, asked him to make it stronger by so changing it as to forbid immunity being extended to any accomplices. The judiciary committee of the House of Representatives, in a unanimous report, thus alluded to the effect of the letter on the Babcock case : —

“ It is alleged that the letter of the Attorney-General had the effect of suppressing testimony in a recent important case ; that the defendant in that case understood it would have that effect, appears from the fact stated by the Attorney-General, that ‘ such defendant, distrusting perhaps the District Attorney at St. Louis, surreptitiously made it public.’ ”

In view of the main facts already stated, it is unnecessary to quote the severely condemnatory resolution of the Judiciary Committee, passed by a non-partisan vote, and reported to the House of Representatives. The manner in which the Department of Justice was used in the wide conspiracy to defeat the conviction of prominent offenders is sufficiently apparent.

The removal of General Henderson, the principal special counsel at St. Louis, is now well understood to have been a measure cunningly forced on the President by those plotters who, some with malignant intent, some with motives of personal interest, were ever seeking to use him to block the way of justice. Early in the summer, and before the trials began at St. Louis, the charge was made to the President that both Dyer and Henderson were his enemies, and was frequently repeated with emphasis. When in closing his fervent extempore speech in the Avery trial, Mr. Henderson referred to certain alleged Executive action, it is true that his words were capable of a construction making them a personal attack upon the President. The moment they were called to his attention, he promptly disclaimed any such purpose. His associates, and others of prominent standing who were present, declared that no offensive interpretation was placed at the time upon these words. It is also worthy of note, that no question was raised over the matter for nearly a week after his speech had been made and the sharp points of it telegraphed. The President had not discovered how badly he had been treated till some of those busily engaged in the attempt to break down the Babcock trial had arrived from St. Louis. Then it was seen how glaring the insult had been; and the Attorney-General, assuming the charge to be true, with his ready pen sent an insulting message through Dyer to Henderson. Meantime the mind of the President had been inflamed with exaggerated representations of the unfriendliness toward himself personally, on the part of those conducting the prosecutions. When the matter came up in Cabinet, and the exact words of Mr. Henderson were considered and his personal hostility affirmed by the President, none could stand in the way of removal, especially as the mouth of the Secretary of the Treasury was closed by an offer on the part of the President to appoint whomever he would select to succeed Mr. Henderson. The only point the President insisted upon was, that one whom he regarded as a personal enemy should retire from public office. He did not stop to reflect upon the expediency or the propriety of introducing his personality into a jury trial.

Thus the President had unwittingly performed new and val-

uable service to the ring. Mr. Henderson had the whole case in hand. He had studied the entire field, and the secret machinery of the ring had been revealed under his careful researches. To rid themselves of him was to secure a relief which could come in no other way. It was shrewd play to ward off opposition on the part of Secretary Bristow, by asking him to name a successor, for no one could step into the cases, master them while they were in progress, and become so efficient as Mr. Henderson had been. His removal was a great triumph for all the thieves yet untried. The President supposed he had only vindicated himself, whereas he had struck a severe blow at those bent on bringing the exposed Whiskey Ring to punishment. Beyond question, in this instance, he was urged on and effectively used by the ring.

Nothing can better indicate the character of some of the vile agencies which were employed by the ring and the politicians to defeat the reform Secretary at every point, than a statement of the operations of its detectives. They worked industriously in Louisville to prove, and at length openly charged, that General Bristow was a member of a large liquor firm ; that he, as District Attorney, had taken money for compromising whiskey suits ; that he had passed cotton claims by which his family were largely profited ; that he had failed to prosecute a prominent officer whose deputy was a heavy defaulter, on account of family ties ; and that he had furnished secret Cabinet information to a prominent firm there for purposes of speculation. All these stories were the result of active detective work performed by men whom it was necessary to pay liberally. Three or four travelled through the interior of the State, trying to gather evidence of fraudulent transactions in mules, while others worked on cotton claims, and others still on army stores. One set schemed for weeks to show that, as an officer in the field, Colonel Bristow had retained money levied on disloyal citizens. And one, more enterprising than the rest, after tracing the Secretary's history back to his boyhood, affirmed that he had once robbed a store, and offered to furnish the proof.

During the Babcock trial, many detectives were at work to weaken the case at St. Louis, by manufacturing charges against

the Secretary and the Solicitor. One was obtained to report directly to the Attorney-General. Another was engaged to frame a case against the Solicitor, and for this purpose invoked the aid of discharged secret-service employees in New York, and offered them "big money" for evidence to disgrace Wilson. One stole private letters from the government counsel, and forged an addition to show that the Secretary and the Solicitor had set spies to watch the President. This was previous to the trial, and at a time when a grand-juryman was acting detective for the defence, and reporting all evidence taken to the White House. An officer, acting under New York officials, was daily exposing the evidence of the government counsel to the defence. One was there to swear that the Solicitor had given an officer five thousand dollars to make a case against Babcock. A noted detective scoured Illinois, and, as he claimed, gathered the necessary evidence to prove that Major Wilson, when United States attorney at Springfield, had appropriated bail money to his own use. Another approached a distiller, and offered for eight hundred dollars to "set up" a case against Wilson that would ruin him. Detectives gained access to the President, and declared that in Wilson's room at the Treasury they had seen and read the manuscript of an editorial for the "New York Sun," bitterly abusive of the President and denunciatory of his course in regard to the whiskey trials; and they went so far as to give him the general points of the article. They promised, in a few days, to bring the editorial in print. And this they did. It probably never occurred to the President that the points given him were such as appear in some shape in almost every issue of that journal, and he was thereafter never quite ready to dismiss the idea that this paper was partially edited at the treasury. This feeling was assiduously cultivated, and bore good fruit for the ring.

These are a few illustrations of one extreme of the opposition. The other was found among politicians of national standing. Their work was even more contemptible than the efforts of the detectives whom they employed. They sat close to the ear of the President, and talked of third term, of duty to party, of damage to party through unnecessary uncovering of fraud, of the evident ambition of Bristow, of his clear pur-

pose to ruin the reputation of the President and his family, and on such ruin step up to power. They denounced sham reform, styled it an affectation, and an insult to the President and the rest of his Cabinet. They sneered at the work of the treasury through all the circles in which they moved, and filled the air of cloak-rooms at the Capitol and of private apartments with mean insinuations which were worse than lies. A very common form of speech by an aspiring senator was, "Is it not significant that the Democrats are always decorating Bristow?"

There were Cabinet officers who bitterly condemned the whiskey war; there were others who at one stage of the case did not deem it prudent to be seen much with the Secretary of the Treasury. There were times when the President would barely recognize him, and times when social intercourse was broken off. The Secretary understood it all as the results of attempts made through a thousand channels to drive him from his work by annoyances which were unbearable.

But time and again, when the schemers deemed success within their grasp, the Secretary swept their work away and faced them without flinching or sign of surrender, determined to complete the work in hand.

At every appearance of these seasons of Executive coolness the question of resignation was considered by the Secretary. His keenly sensitive nature made him thoroughly alive to the awkwardness of holding a seat in the Cabinet where cordial relations had ceased to exist. Two considerations repeatedly overcame his purpose to withdraw: he felt that the President's bearing was caused by the false representations poured into his ear for a purpose, and that it was the result of one part of the struggle which the ring was making for life. The aim was to drive him from the Cabinet by indirection. To resign was to surrender. Understanding as he did, and as the President could not understand, the plotting in progress on all sides, the Secretary deemed it his duty to advise him fully, and so at intervals the President, seeing the truth, came into accord with his Secretary again. The other consideration which determined him not to retire upon his own motion was the argument used by his friends, that he owed it to the country to

carry his work through, and never voluntarily abandon it till the ring he had exposed was punished.

By the opening of the new year, the question of nominating General Bristow at Cincinnati had become prominent. Its effect was to pile up obstacles and embarrassments in the path of duty he was pursuing. The entire machinery which two prominent candidates could wield was turned actively against him; and while it would not be accurate to say that they worked in the interest of the Whiskey Ring, yet they served all the purposes of allies. Their friends used every advantage of access to the President to arouse new jealousies, fan old prejudices into flame, and by all insidious flattery and ingenious forms of attack excite renewed hostility to the Secretary. These friends were allies of the Whiskey Ring in pushing Congressional investigations against him, and the spectacle was presented of Republicans urging these inquiries forward after the Democrats themselves had become convinced that nothing could be shown to the discredit of the Secretary. When the trial of Babcock came on, all forces heretofore named joined to denounce Mr. Bristow to the President for what they insisted was his evident purpose to strike the official and personal family of General Grant. The leaders of these combined forces had learned the spell which was to bring final victory. So long as their standard, inscribed "Bristow's ambition involves Grant's ruin," was lifted up, their armies prevailed, and when it fell their forces were put to flight. So they rallied one and all to stay up the hands of these prophets of evil. Detectives, politicians, plunderers of the revenue, candidates for the Presidency, disgraced officials, disappointed claim agents, and the representatives of many broken rings, gathered about this magic standard and held it up till the battle was done. Just in proportion as the people gathered about the courageous and sorely pressed Secretary did all these combinations redouble their efforts. The praise of the press was a fierce breath fanning their hate. The unmistakable evidence that the heart of the people was with him intensified those efforts by which the machine so regularly and certainly defeats the popular will.

But suddenly, as all these allied influences were about to

shout victory, there came unexpected defeat. The President had privately made known to a few his purpose to remove Mr. Bristow at the close of the Babcock trial, and without regard to its result. He had prepared a harsh and denunciatory letter demanding his resignation, and this was to be given to the press as his justification before the public for dismissing a man who, for purposes of his own ambition, had not scrupled to compass the ruin of the President and his nearest friends.

Fortunately, there were real friends of General Grant who learned of this determination. They felt he had been misled, and that his decision was the triumph which the ring had long labored to secure. Some of them knew that those in whom the President reposed most confidence, and who had been most active against the Secretary, had really been false in their official relations. In this grave emergency, when the President was about to take a step fatal to himself and to the party, because prompted and obtained by the ring, they determined at all hazards to open his eyes to the real character of some whom he had trusted most fully. The men who did this were not advocates of Mr. Bristow's political advancement, and their course was prompted alone by friendship for General Grant and interest in the welfare of the party. These friends called on the President, declared to him that he had long been deceived by men about him; and as a proof of this assured him that his private secretary and an ex-secretary had been engaged in the Black Friday speculation; that they had lost a large sum in the transaction; and that the officer who had been selected as judge advocate of the Babcock court at Chicago was the trustee for settling the losses of his secretaries. The President was overwhelmed with these developments, and the assurances that they were fair indications of the treatment he had received from men he trusted implicitly. At that time he accepted the proofs and the statements. The relations of Mr. Bristow were then thoroughly and candidly discussed, and as a result the President sent for his Secretary, and such confessions and reconciliations followed as seldom pass between men in high station. General Babcock also left the White House. The Belknap impeachment, falling upon Republicans with startling effect at this same juncture, caused even those who had

denounced Mr. Bristow's methods to turn eagerly toward him, thankful that in the storm bursting so suddenly upon the party, they could cling to him, — at least while it was passing.

For a brief period the Secretary was allowed to prosecute his work in comparative peace. But such combinations as were bent on his destruction worked none the less actively and effectively because they labored in secret.

A new element long scheming in this manner had come into the field with open defiance. This was composed of some of the chief politicians from the Pacific coast. In September Commissioner Pratt and Solicitor Wilson sent agents to San Francisco to uncover the Whiskey Ring existing there. Frauds to the amount of a million and a half of dollars were soon discovered. Late in the autumn the contest between the distillers and the department had become intensely bitter. Two United States senators and a representative appeared as active defenders of the former. False charges were filed against the officers sent to investigate. Nearly all the Federal officers in San Francisco combined against them. The changes asked by the Treasury Department were delayed. Those finally ordered were such as gave the ring little concern. Promises made at the White House were reconsidered, and at length the Secretary found himself powerless to wage any further effective war upon the California Ring. Senator Sargent at length succeeded in raising a direct issue between the President and Secretary, by demanding that certain officers should be dismissed, who, under the orders of the Secretary and Commissioner, had done faithful service in unearthing the California Ring. The contest was sharp, and ended by the Secretary declining to make the removals, and partially convincing the President that they ought not to be made. The entering wedge of difficulty had, however, been firmly planted, and every day witnessed its advance till the final rupture came. The San Francisco Ring was thoroughly intrenched at home among corrupt officials, and defended before the President with brazen effrontery by members of Congress. It was a contest begun and carried on mainly under Commissioner Pratt. It was managed with ability and skill, and would have proved eminently successful but for the aid received from the sources

named. As a final result, its complications largely determined the retirement of the Secretary and the Commissioner. In this case, as so often before, the mind of the President was daily poisoned by falsehood, until at last, unconsciously, he did the bidding of the ring.

Through the eight weeks preceding the Cincinnati Convention, the pressure against the Secretary increased in proportion as the contest waxed warm over the nomination. All influences heretofore pursuing him were united for final attack. His defeat would be salvation for many, and gain for all. But in the face of it the prosecutions went on, and day by day convictions of the ring were recorded. The leaders in St. Louis were in prison, and few had escaped. Those at Chicago and Milwaukee were either convicted or sure to be. In spite of the obstacles which had been piled along his way, the ring was thoroughly disgraced and shattered over all the field of first attack. The time had come when the Secretary could retire without being exposed to the charge of abandoning the fight. The increasing coolness of the President was clearly indicative of an approaching issue ; and so, to end the long battle at this comparatively favorable moment, the President was informed by Mr. Bristow that immediately after the Cincinnati Convention he designed to tender his resignation. Four days after its adjournment the Secretary and the Solicitor retired,—without receiving a word of written or spoken thanks. A few days later Commissioner Pratt was driven out. It was fitting that one selected specially to aid in the beginning of the work, and who had prosecuted it vigorously and fearlessly throughout, should thus close his labors. Promotion for honorable services in this war differed from that bestowed after Appomattox. The more brilliant the service, the greater the portion of contumely and abuse. One by one the chief actors in it were called before the lines, despoiled of their insignia, and drummed out of the administration camp, while the hero of the country's greatest war seemed to have been circumvented by strategy, captured, and put on duty in the prison-house of the rings.

Thus ended the long campaign. The net pecuniary result to

government will be over one million dollars. Of two hundred and thirty persons indicted, about one hundred have pleaded guilty, about twenty have been convicted, a dozen have fled from the country, and only five have been acquitted. The cases of the others are pending in the courts. The Whiskey Ring of the entire country, except that on the Pacific coast, is broken up, and such checks and guards have been devised as will render these former methods of fraud impossible upon any extended scale. In casting up the grand result, to these figures must be added the moral value of the blows struck by Secretary Bristow for reform, the awakening of public sentiment, the overthrow of a gigantic combination for evil, the full discovery of its long-practised modes, and the increase of several millions in the revenue during the year just closed. Had no money returns been received, and the campaign cost a million instead of thirty thousand dollars, which in round numbers was expended for that portion of the work performed by the Treasury Department, the gain to the government in the directions suggested would still be of immense value.

The space which this plain presentation of the story has required forbids comment. At every step the facts supply it. In view, however, of recent attempts to fix reproach upon the Secretary and his former assistants, it is but just to him and them that certain statements be put on record.

With the retirement of the Secretary came cessation of hostilities against the ring. To suspend all pending and incomplete action, and, so far as possible, procure pardon and remission for the convicted, was the next end in view. Since, from the first, misrepresentation of the Secretary had proved a most serviceable weapon, it was again brought into play. Hence arose the cry of a Bristow conspiracy, which sounded along the ranks of the ring till the edifying spectacle was presented of an apparent prosecution of the late Secretary and his assistants, in which they were treated as the leaders of a ring of conspirators against the President, his family, and his friends, where the witnesses were obtained by granting immunity, in the shape of continuance in office, to all who would testify against their former chiefs.

Every charge they have brought disappears before the truth. From the beginning of the movement till the resignation of the Secretary, the President was promptly and fully advised of its every feature, and especially of each indication that any near him, or of those who claimed his friendship, were in the slightest degree involved. And this was often done to the great injury of the prosecutions; for through General Babcock, his counsel, and those about him, the facts thus communicated were promptly placed in possession of the ring. After two or three marked instances of the damage thus inflicted upon the prosecution, most important testimony was discovered. The question arose whether it ought to be given to the President, in view of the certainty that General Babcock would at once receive it. The Secretary, upon being advised to withhold it for a time, peremptorily declined, on the ground that his duty, under the circumstances, was to deal loyally and frankly with the President, without stopping to forecast results. In this case, in less than an hour, General Babcock appeared at the department and showed his full knowledge of the matter.

The Secretary has been charged with making his move as a sensational play for the Presidency. As a matter of fact, he was extremely unwilling to strike the three cities at once, lest he should be charged with seeking effect. His own plan was to deal with each establishment in succession, and avoid all unnecessary public mention of the work in progress. It was in spite of his expressed wishes that the move at the outset gained such notoriety in the press. And throughout the long struggle, by his peremptory order, facts that would have startled the country and brought him great applause were carefully withheld.

The Presidency was a matter about which his most intimate friends could with difficulty approach him, until the press had made his name so prominent that it would have been affectation to keep silence with them longer. There was no organization in Washington formed to promote or secure Bristow's nomination. There were not more than six persons in the Treasury Department known to be earnestly for him. Nearly all the changes made, both in the department and through the country, on account of the whiskey war, resulted in the selec-

tion of men openly active for other candidates. The custom-houses, from New Brunswick to Mexico, and on the Pacific coast, were, with scarce an exception, against him. There were not a dozen revenue officers in the land who were known to favor him. He was simply executing the laws, and doing absolutely nothing beyond.

If further evidence were needed to prove there was no organized Bristow movement in Washington, it can be found in the circumstances attending the preparation of his letter of resignation, as the Babcock trial was closing. The President's determination to remove him, and the fact that he had written a harsh and denunciatory letter demanding his resignation, had come to the Secretary's knowledge. The triumph of the ring, and his own temporary discomfiture, seemed certain. For him it was a crisis of no common import. If he had powerful friends conspiring with him for the Presidency, then, surely, the occasion for their presence and advice had come. Certainly they must have been about him in this supreme moment. Here the truth again confounds slander. When the course he should take was discussed and decided, but four persons were with him. Two of these were present by accident, and none held prominent position. He had consulted only two others by letter. The question determined also bears pointedly upon the charge. Two forms of resignation had been prepared, — one reciting facts, which would surely have excited the entire country, as all now can see. The other was a simple note, stating that, in obedience to the President's request, he tendered his resignation. Great as was the provocation and the temptation, the Secretary himself decided that he would adopt the brief form, and trust the future for full vindication.

The unprovoked and galling attacks following his retirement, inspired by the same combinations which had so long pursued him, might have excused his giving the truth to the country. The temptation to do this was increased, when the President, again deceived by the false representations of the ring, and again led blindfold by the politicians, seemed to countenance the general attack on Bristow and his friends. The high position taken by the Secretary against answering before a

committee of Congress was ridiculed as the pretext of a demagogue, who knew that if he should speak truthfully the facts would reflect nothing but credit on the President. The letter relieving Mr. Bristow from all obligation of secrecy, and calling upon him to testify, sounded well. But it was written with the full knowledge that in Cabinet Mr. Bristow had always taken such strong ground against the right of Congressional committees to inquire concerning Executive consultations, as to make it certain that he would not respond by testifying.

When Solicitor Wilson was called, and testified so fully, the charge went out that Mr. Bristow had put him forward to tell the story. So far from this having any foundation in truth, the Ex-Secretary sent a messenger from New England, urging the Solicitor to disclose nothing which could be construed into a reflection upon the President, and to decline absolutely to touch upon the question of the President's attitude.

Since, from the first, Mr. Wilson had been charged with managing all the details of the case for the Secretary, and was his medium of communication with those who were conducting the prosecution, the very necessities of the situation made him acquainted with the President's course in regard to the whole matter, and with the Cabinet action thereon. No confidence was violated in thus informing him. Without the knowledge he could not have given the necessary directions. And when pressed by the committee, he alone, acting under the solemnity of an oath which bound him to tell not only the truth, but the whole truth, could decide the limits of his answer.

As for the President, those who know the most of the secret history of this move are freest to declare that in no instance did he do anything designed by him to protect the guilty or impede the course of justice. That his acts and his delays often accomplished both is now painfully apparent.

At the same time it is true that whenever the ring, by false representations, had developed serious Executive opposition to some feature of the prosecutions, or excited suspicion against the Secretary, the latter, until a late day, was always able to remove both, and disconcert the ring by a plain and courageous talk with the President. On these occasions General Grant

always inclined to the right. But the constant recurrence of such explanations, and the infamous character of the plottings which made them necessary, continually impeded the prosecutions and discouraged the Secretary. It is also true that on several occasions when he had decided to resign, the President insisted upon his remaining, and for a time thereafter the contingency of a resignation for such causes seemed to render the President alive to the situation.

Considering the nature and influence of the forces arrayed against the Secretary, and the facilities they enjoyed for constant access to the President, it is scarcely a matter of wonder that at times his eyes were blinded and his deepest prejudices aroused. His final surrender to these influences is more difficult to excuse.

The ambition which Secretary Bristow did cherish was to accomplish something toward true reform in government. His was brave, honest, and modest labor toward that end, and that alone. The result attained would have been remarkable had all classes of government officers and Republican politicians given him hearty aid. In view of the desperate opposition encountered on all sides, the degree of success becomes a matter of astonishment. What triumphs for practical reform might have followed had the Secretary been able to command that support which the letter of Governor Hayes gives promise of extending to all such workers!

The political student will see in this recital something far beyond the story. Mortifying as its main features are, they but truthfully reflect the whole management of the men inside politics. At his first step in the direction of reform, Secretary Bristow encountered them, and they stood across his path in battle array to the last. His success sprung directly from ignoring the usual methods by which frauds had been detected, calling unofficial persons to his aid, and directing their efforts through channels which were new to the ring and known only to his Solicitor in the department. Thus was he obliged to work at first outside of all regular official machinery in order to circumvent thieves. And when by a bold sortie had he captured the Whiskey Ring, he found himself in the position of a general who had taken a picket post and aroused an army.

Whichever way he turned, its watchful hosts confronted him. If he laid his hand upon the safe-burglars, upon plundering claim agents, upon the District Ring, upon the custom-house in New York, upon unfaithful officers in Washington, upon public robbers anywhere, the same lines of reserves moved forward to attack him. Senators, representatives, local politicians in swarms, the whole Washington lobby with its ramifications reaching every part of the land, thieves, detectives, officials at the White House, — such was the army which fought against the Secretary's reform. In a word he encountered the combinations inside politics, — the machine. It belongs to every party in power. Its corruptions increase with years, and its strength does not decay with age. Numbers of both parties have been represented in every great fraud yet discovered in Washington. The old Indian ring of the days when Democracy ruled eclipsed all later efforts of Republican thieves. The palmy days of the Whiskey Ring were in Andrew Johnson's time, for then the spirit tax was higher. Credit Mobilier had its Democratic participators ; so of Black Friday and Pacific Mail ; so of the District Ring, so of land jobs, and so of the Memphis and El Paso swindle. It was even impossible for Republican rascals to shake off Democrats when they came to rob the black man's savings-bank.

The machine, without regard to party, is corrupt. It commands either the active assistance or the silence of nearly all politicians. And these silent men are to-day the worst enemies of the Republic. They make it safe to defraud. They render it practically impossible to overthrow corruptionists. They would resent an accusation of participation in any of this robbery, yet are they accessories one and all. The machine of party is opposed to pure government. To those who control it reform is death. Not till the people rise in might and strike these political usurpers down, will reform become possible. And it will remain impossible so long as the voters of the country tolerate public men who, for the sake of party, rally to the defence of its political thieves.

H. V. BOYNTON.